

The aspirations of the Palestinian people and of their Israeli neighbors will continue to be undermined if Iran and Syria continue to funnel support for terrorist groups who kill innocent civilians and challenge the aspirations of moderates.

Just like we in our country would and have responded to a terrorist attack on our soil, I fully support the right of Israel to defend its people against rockets launched by Hamas. Hamas has fired more than 6,300 rockets and mortars at Israeli population centers since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. No country can endure such actions. Hamas had an opportunity to govern the Gaza strip and work with Israel to meet the needs of the Palestinian people when Israel withdrew from Gaza in August 2005. Instead of renouncing its goal to eliminate the Israeli state and provide true leadership for the Palestinian people, Hamas chose violence and most recently broke the cease-fire which Egypt had brokered.

Fatah in the West Bank and Palestinian moderates have shown the way by growing the economy there. Moderates on both sides will find lasting solutions which must then be actively supported by our new administration, the region and our European allies. Until that time when all parties can return to the negotiating table, I urge Israel to keep its operation focused on its core goal of eliminating the military threat posed by Hamas while protecting the lives of civilians who must be Israel's partners in the future.

RECOGNIZING LUCIUS YOUNG OF SPRING HILL, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lucius Young of Hernando County, Florida. Lucius will do something later this year that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate his 100th birthday.

Lucius Young was born May 8, 1909 in Martel, Florida. A native Floridian, Lucius attended school at Howard University, Georgetown University and Fessenden Academy. He eventually married Muriel Young and the two did not have any children. While one of his proudest memories is his high school graduation, he remembers when his brother earned the title Professor and he was able to address him as such.

During World War II, Lucius served in the Army Infantry, where he met general Douglas MacArthur and heard him make the statement, "I shall return." He also met President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he became a special representative of the president as a commissioned officer. Lucius said he was also happy to meet Mrs. Roosevelt. Lucius retired from the military as a commissioned officer. In fact, Lucius's proudest moment was when his mother said that he made her proud when he became a commissioned officer.

Lucius moved to Hernando County when he married his wife Muriel. Today Lucius says that just eating, sleeping and reading give him all the pleasures he needs to be content. He likes it here in Hernando County because it's clean and quiet. Lucius' advice for young peo-

ple is to study hard in school including subjects you don't like.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Lucius Young for reaching his 100th birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as him.

INTRODUCING THE CRITICAL ELECTION INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2008

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Critical Election Infrastructure Act of 2009.

This legislation is a necessary and vital investment in our citizens and the future of our democracy. This bill authorizes \$1 billion to states and local governments over the next four years for the acquisition of additional voting systems and equipment, improving training of election administration officials, upgrading existing election equipment, and allocating additional election administration officials to polling places serving greater numbers of voters. This funding is essential to improve efficiency and fairness in the operation of polling places in federal elections.

President Dwight Eisenhower once said, "The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter." In the 2008 Presidential election, an astounding 130 million people voted and, even more exciting, an unprecedented number of youth and minorities lined up at the polls to participate in the electoral process, many for the first time. While this increased turnout is emblematic of our nation's commitment to our future, in some parts of the country it caused undue difficulties.

For example, throughout South Florida and elsewhere in the country, hundreds of thousands of voters found themselves waiting on interminable lines, sometimes for over five hours. *Five hours!* Forced to stand in the heat and during Florida's famous afternoon thunderstorms with little food and water, voters are to be commended for their civic commitment. But American citizens should not have to face such difficulties when exercising their sacred right to vote.

Elections officials simply did not have enough equipment and trained personnel on the ground to speedily and effectively handle such large numbers of voters. Clearly what is needed is more: more polling booths, more trained workers, more equipment, and more polling locations and facilities to handle increasing numbers of voters.

Madam Speaker, voting should not be a right granted only to those who can stand in line the longest or can go the longest without food or a bathroom break. Voting is the sacred right of all eligible citizens. We have a solemn responsibility to ensure the greatest possible access to exercise that right. Authorizing funding for the necessary equipment and personnel is an essential first step in that process. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING RANDALL JOHNSON

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, at the end of 2008, a great Georgia lawman turned in his badge to retire after a long, distinguished career.

Randall Johnson worked for Fayette County as sheriff for 32 years. At his retirement, he was one of the longest serving sheriffs in the state of Georgia. But more important, he was one of the most distinguished sheriffs in Georgia.

Sheriff Johnson oversaw the department during three decades of incredible growth. In the 1970s when Johnson first won election to the post, the Fayette Sheriff's Department has less than a dozen employees in a county then considered a rural outpost. By the time he left, the department had transformed into a modern law enforcement operation that protected a large suburban county in the booming metropolitan Atlanta region. Sheriff Johnson acted as a constant, a steady hand and a voice of leadership throughout those times of change.

The sheriff's post fulfilled Johnson's lifelong dream. He said at his graduation from Fayette County High School in 1960 that he was going to be sheriff one day. He got his start in law enforcement working for the state of Georgia, busting moonshine operations along the multitude of Georgia's creeks and streams. As testament to the depth of respect he holds in the community, some of those moonshiners he arrested decades ago showed up at his retirement party to wish him well.

During my two decades in politics, I've seen a lot of politicians come and go. Most are quickly forgotten. It is the rare public official who holds the job for three decades. It is even rarer that one constantly maintains the integrity, dignity and honesty that Sheriff Johnson demonstrated in office.

I'm well aware that, as I enter my third term in the U.S. House of Representatives, I owe a large debt to Sheriff Johnson. I got my start in politics in Fayette County as a state representative. No one in the county back then won office without the express consent of Sheriff Johnson. His support was the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for any local campaign. He carried great weight not because he carried the proverbial big stick but because he had earned the people's trust and respect. His loyalty and backing through all these years humbles me.

In Fayette County, "sheriff and -Randall Johnson" are synonymous. When he entered a room, everybody knew the sheriff had arrived—even if he wasn't wearing his uniform. His presence was a statement in itself. The county will sorely miss one of the greatest leaders in its history, but the department that he has built up will carry on, and its continued success will serve as part of Sheriff Johnson's legacy.

On behalf of the people of Georgia's 3rd Congressional District, I want to thank Sheriff Johnson for his lifetime of service to the people of Georgia and to Fayette County. He is a great American and an inspiration to us all. Best wishes to Sheriff Johnson and his wife Kaye as they enter a new phase of life in retirement, a reward that's richly deserved.